

on dry, newly ploughed rice fields I should say they are pintail. This is borne out by the fact that the first snipe to be obtained in this district in the shooting season in early September are almost invariably of this species.

In this case the nests are said to be made in the long grass on the bunds of rice fields. As in the standard reference books no mention is made of snipe remaining to breed in this part of India I am writing to enquire whether this is generally known to be the case. There can be no question of the birds being incapacitated and unable to migrate since as many as a dozen were seen in this particular neighbourhood, which incidentally is an intensely cultivated and well populated one. Since there are many other such suitable localities in the district there seems no reason why they should not breed fairly widely in these parts.

BUNGALOW NO. 51,

O. H. DE ST. CROIX.

CANTONMENT BELGAUM.

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XIX.—BIRD NOTES FROM THE DRY ZONE OF UPPER BURMA.

So little is on record of the birds of the dry zone of Upper Burma since Macdonald wrote of Myingyan (*J.B.N.H.S.*, xvii, 1906 and meads of the Chindwin (*idem*, xviii, 1907) that I venture to record some notes made during two short trips through parts of the Shwebo and Sagaing districts in December 1931 and June 1936. I have not recorded a full list of the common birds seen. In December 1931 I marched from Wetlet to Shwebangon and down the newly canalised area to Thazin at the south end of the great Halingyi Lake. In June 1936 I spent two days on Wetlet Lake in Shwebo. On this occasion, the water was remarkably high. The huge bulrush beds of the lake were being harvested, which must have greatly disturbed their commonest occupants, the Yellow Bittern and the Purple Gallinule. I got the impression the ducks had not yet commenced to nest. One note recorded below was made at Maymyo (4,000 ft.) on the edge of the dry zone.

1. *Argya gularis*. White-throated Babbler.

It was interesting to note that, despite the flooding of large new areas by the extension of the canal zone, both this species and *Mirafra assamica* so typical of dry sandy country, still cling to the thorn-bushes fringing the canal though cornland stretches for miles on both sides. One would have expected both species to have moved elsewhere.

2. [*Acrocephalus stentoreus*? Great Reed Warbler?

I *thought* I saw two or three in the big reed-beds far out on Wetlet in June but was never sure. I certainly never heard a Reed-Warbler of any species singing.]

3. **Prinia flaviventris flaviventris.** Yellow-bellied Wren-Warbler.

Many were seen on Wetlet in June, some a long way from land. Two specimens were obtained and identified by Dr. C. B. Ticehurst.

4. **Mirafrassa assamica.** Burmese Bush Lark.

See no. 1 above. Still common in the narrow fringe of thorns along the canal.

5. **Butastur teesa.** White-eyed Buzzard Eagle.

Said in the *Fauna* to be found 'throughout north and western Burma', it seems to be in Burma largely a dry zone bird, though Armstrong and Davison recorded it from Thaton. The only place in which I have found it was near Shwebangon (Shwebo) in December 1931 when I saw several. The general appearance in flight is very pale. When at rest, the head is very falcon-like and the white patch on the nape is noticeable. It has a quick lilted flight.

6. **Streptopelia decaocto.** Indian Ring Dove.

The *Fauna* gives its distribution as 'all Burma'. This is probably wrong as Oates never got any south of Thayetmyo. It is almost certainly a dry zone bird. I saw a number in thorn-jungle on the edge of the canal and near Shwebo. The pale grey tail and yellow skin round the eye are distinctive characters in the field.

7. **Coturnix coromandelica.** Black-breasted Quail.

Common and calling all night in December in crops near Shwebo.

8. **Gallinula chloropus.** Moorhen.

One or two pairs on Wetlet in June 1921. I found a nest with one egg in it. All the breeding records of this Moorhen seem to be from central Burma and further observation is desirable on this bird's status in the province. In Myitkyina it appears to be a winter migrant.

9. **Gallicrex cinerea.** Watercock.

One pair seen on Wetlet in June and others heard. It would be interesting to know whether this curious and little-known bird is resident or a rains-immigrant.

10. **Porphyrio poliocephalus.** Purple Moorhen.

Abundant in the bulrush beds. I found no nests and they probably suffer much at this season from the bulrush harvesters.

11. **Hydrophasianus chirurgus.** Pheasant-tailed Jacana.

Many on Wetlet on June 21-22, apparently not yet breeding. They were in full plumage and usually sitting out on the open water, with their long tails held up in a curve clear of the water. I could find no trace of a nest.

12. **Rostratula benghalensis.** Painted Snipe.

In June 1932, when the Maymyo lake was nearly dry, several pairs of Painted Snipe undoubtedly bred there. On June 19 I saw a male with three small young ones crossing a patch of mud, and caught a brood a few days later, the male bird scrambling and fluttering about close to me.

13. **Burhinus oedicnemus.** Stone Plover.

A large gathering seen on some fields near Wetlet on June 22nd.

14. **Glareola maldivarum.** Large Pratincole.

Several, apparently with young, on the cultivated land west of Wetlet Lake on June 21.

15. **Lobivanellus indicus.** Red-wattled Lapwing.

A party were seen on June 22nd flying high along the edge of Wetlet from the north. It is so unusual to see these very sedentary birds flying at any height above the ground that it seems possible that they were migrating.

16. **Anhinga melanogaster.** Indian Darter.

The local name is 'U-ban'. Only seen in December and not apparently breeding. (I saw no signs of nesting cormorants and only *Phalacrocorax niger* in June.)

17. **Pelecanus crispus.** Spotted-billed Pelican.

Several on Wetlet on June 21, some of which seemed to be immature. It is remarkable that no one has discovered Pelicans breeding in Burma in the last 40 years. Though such ungainly looking birds, they can turn on their own axis with amazing speed and rise off the water in three strokes.

18. **Ibis leucocephalus.** Painted Stork.

The Burma records of these conspicuous birds are remarkably few. It is not, I think, any longer 'very abundant in Southern Pegu' (Oates) and practically all the records are from the dry zone, though it does not seem to be known where it breeds. I saw seven or eight adults and one immature bird on Wetlet on June 22.

19. **Dissoura e. episcopus.** White-necked Stork.

20. **Xenorhynchus asiaticus.** Black-necked Stork.

I saw a few on both occasions but no signs of breeding. There seems astonishingly little on record in Burma of the breeding of both these large and easily-observed birds.

21. **Ardea purpurea.** Purple Heron.

A few on Wetlet in June but I could find no nest.

22. **Ardea cinerea.** Grey Heron.

Saw a very large gathering of 50 or 60 on Thazin in December, and one pair on Wetlet in June. I can only find two breeding

records in Burma (Macdonald's in Myingyan), and my own in Henzada.

23. **Sterna albifrons sinensis.**

I shot an immature bird out of a small party on Wetlet on June 22. No other Terns were seen and there were no signs of any *Chlidonias* nesting.

24. **Tringa erythropus.** Spotted Redshank.

A very large flock on Thazin in December.

25. **Bubulcus ibis.** Cattle Egret.

Common, no nesting colony seen.

26. **Egretta g. garzetta.** Little Egret.

Common, no nesting colony seen.

27. **Ixobrychus sinensis.** Yellow Bittern.

The common bittern of the Wetlet jheel in June and apparently breeding in the big bulrush swamps, though I failed to find a nest. Numbers were seen fighting to and fro and many were flushed from places where they clearly spent their time clambering from rush to rush. Like the Chestnut Bittern, they are not shy or crepuscular at this time of year.

28. **Ixobrychus cinnamomeus.** Chestnut Bittern.

Two or three pairs breeding on Wetlet. Flushed one pair off a very *kutch*a nest with one egg in bulrushes.

29. **Nettapus coromandelianus.** Cotton Teal.

In large parties on Wetlet on June 20, apparently of adults.

30. **Dendrocygna fulva.** Large Whistling Teal.

Several seen, nearly all in pairs, on June 22. The larger of the two Whistling teal seems to be mainly a bird of Central Burma. I have never seen any in Myitkyina and few in Lower Burma, and the records, what there are, suggest it is a dry zone bird.

31. **Anas poecilorhyncha.** Spotbill.

A good many seen in pairs and small parties which had probably not yet commenced to breed (cf. Macdonald, *Journal*, xvii, 503).

32. **Podiceps ruficollis.** Little Grebe.

Local name: 'On-salank'.

Very common: Saw several nests with clutches of two to five eggs some very imperfectly covered up.

KINGSLERE.

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